

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER THANOM ON U.S. PRESENCE/WITHDRAWALS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM AN INFORMAL USIS TRANSLATION  
OF PRIME MINISTER THANOM'S NEWS CONFERENCE OF AUGUST 29.  
BEGIN EXCERPTS:

THANOM: KHUN BANYAT OF THE "BANGKOK POST ASKS WHAT PROGRESS  
HAS BEEN MADE REGARDING THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. MILITARY  
FORCES, AND FROM STUDY OF THE SITUATION AT PRESENT CAN  
IT BE ESTIMATED WHAT THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN MILITARY  
FORCES STATIONED IN THAILAND SHOULD BE? NOW LONG A TIME  
WILL IT TAKE TO WITHDRAW MILITARY FORCES?

I HAVE ALREADY STATED THAT THE FIRST WITHDRAWAL OF  
AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES FROM THAILAND WOULD BE CARRIED  
OUT BEFORE THE END OF THE PRESENT MONTH. THAI AND U.S.  
OFFICIALS HELD A MEETING AND CONSULTATIONS ON AUGUST 24,  
WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY THE ISSUE OF A JOINT STATEMENT.

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OFFICIALS REPORT NOW THAT AFTER MAKING PREPARATIONS IN

FULL TO TURN OVER DUTIES IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE FIRST WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES CAN BE CARRIED OUT. THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR CAME AND HELD A MEETING WITH THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER AT 9.30 A.M. TODAY AND HE STATED THAT AN AIR UNIT OF AMERICAN MARINES STATIONED IN NAM PONG WILL START WITHDRAWING WITHIN THIS WEEK. OTHER UNITS WILL MOST PROBABLY BE WITHDRAWN BY GRADUAL STAGES.

ESTIMATING THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES THAT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE STATIONED IN THAILAND DEPENDS ON THE NEED OF THE SITUATION AND THE DANGER MENACING THE STABILITY AND SECURITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. IT IS GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES STATIONED IN THAILAND TO BE REDUCED TO THE MINIMUM, BUT THEY MUST BE IN SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO DETER AND SUPPRESS DANGER THREATENING AND BE CAPABLE TO RETORT AT ONCE AGAINST ANY AGGRESSION COMMITTED BY THE OTHER SIDE, REGARDLESS WHETHER THE AGGRESSION COMMITTED IS ON A SMALL OR ON A LARGE SCALE. ACTION CAN BE TAKEN UNDER SEATO AND UNDER THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT CONCLUDED BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE U.S., SHOULD AGGRESSION BE COMMITTED. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE FOR CERTAIN AT PRESENT HOW LONG A TIME WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES FROM THAILAND. BUT WHEN THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT JOINTLY APPROVE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ANY UNIT FROM THAILAND IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG FOR THAT UNIT TO BE WITHDRAWN. AN EXAMPLE THAT CAN BE SEEN IS THE AGREEMENT REACHED ON AUGUST 24 TO WITHDRAW A UNIT STATIONED IN NAM PONG AND THIS FIRST UNIT WILL BE WITHDRAWN WITHIN THIS WEEK.

A QUESTION ON THE SAME SUBJECT PUT BY KHUN SUMALEE OF UPI IS FROM WHICH BASE IN THAILAND THE FIRST UNITS OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES WILL BE WITHDRAWN AND WHAT KINDS OF PLANES WILL BE WITHDRAWN. IN THE JOINT STATEMENT ISSUED ON AUGUST 24 IT WAS STATED THAT THE FIRST UNITS TO BE WITHDRAWN WOULD BE FROM VARIOUS BASES, NOT FROM ONE BASE ONLY, SUCH AS FROM NAM PONG, FROM TAKHLI, FROM KORAT, FROM UBON, AND FROM UDON. MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLANES WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM AIRBASES IN THAILAND, MOST OF THEM BEING TACTICAL PLANES, SUCH AS F-111S AND F-4S. THE FIRST

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SERVICEMEN TO BE WITHDRAWN WILL TOTAL ABOUT 3,550 MEN.

REPORTER: WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF SERVICEMEN WHO WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM NAM PONG?

THANOM: I CANNOT REMEMBER THE EXACT NUMBER. MILITARY FORCES STATIONED THERE ARE MARINE UNITS GUARDING THE AIRFIELD, AND THERE ARE PLANES OF THE AMERICAN NAVY BASED

THERE.

REPORTER: NORMALLY WHEN AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES ARE WITHDRAWN IT IS CUSTOMARY FOR THEM TO TURN OVER MILITARY ASSETS AND EQUIPMENT AND THEY ARE NOT INCLUDED IN MILITARY AID GIVEN. WHAT ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN IN THE MATTER?

THANOM: DOES THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN PLANES FROM THAILAND INCLUDE B-52S ALSO?

THANOM: GREAT INTEREST IS FELT IN THIS MATTER. THE WITHDRAWAL OF TACTICAL PLANES -- THESE B-52S -- WILL BE TAKEN UP FOR JOINT CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING WHICH WILL BE HELD DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER, SOME TIME BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 3-7. NO DEFINITE DATE HAS BEEN FIXED YET AND IT DEPENDS ON THE DAY THAT WILL BE MOST CONVENIENT FOR A JOINT MEETING TO BE HELD. THE SITE OF THE MEETING WILL MOST PROBABLY BE THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SOME B-52S MIGHT BE WITHDRAWN FROM THOSE SENT TO BE STATIONED HERE AT A LATER TIME.

REPORTER: WHEN YOU SAID THAT THE TURNING OVER OF WEAPONS TO THAILAND ARE INCLUDED IN NEGOTIATIONS HELD, WAS IT INCLUDED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS HELD ON AUGUST 24 OR WILL IT BE INCLUDED IN NEGOTIATIONS TO BE HELD EARLY IN SEPTEMBER?

THANOM: IT WILL BE INCLUDED IN NEGOTIATIONS IN MEETINGS IN THE FUTURE.

REPORTER: DO WE HAVE A LIST TO PRESENT TO THE MEETING?

THANOM: EVERY ARMED FORCE IS COMPILING A LIST OF WHAT IT NEEDS.

REPORTER: ABOUT 100 PLANES WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM NAM PONG. WILL THEY BE WITHDRAWN SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICEMEN FROM NAM PONG THIS TIME?

THANOM: THERE ARE NOT AS MANY AS 100 PLANES BASED IN NAM PONG. THEY WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM OTHER BASES ALSO.

END EXCERPTS.

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